

What You Can Do

There are lots of ways that each of us can contribute to the improvement of the Delaware Bay and Estuary Basin. This list includes only a few of them. Get involved! The future of this environmental treasure – and the health of future generations – rests with each of us.

Plant Beach Grass

Since 1990, dedicated volunteers have stabilized Delaware's sand dunes by planting more than 3 million stems of Cape American beach grass on them. The beach grass is planted annually in March on all public dunes from Pickering Beach south to Fenwick Island. Call the Division of Soil and Water Conservation, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control for information at (302) 739-9921.



Clean Up The Coast

An annual cleanup of Delaware's coast has been under way for 16 years as part of the Delmarva Coastal Cleanup and Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup. Volunteers join a cooperative effort with other groups on the Delmarva Peninsula to pick up debris along the coast as well as collect data for the Ocean Conservancy. Delaware's cleanup areas span the length of the state's 97-mile eastern coastline. Call the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control for information at (302) 739-9902.

Stream Watch

Join this grassroots volunteer waterway protection program co-sponsored by the Delaware Nature Society and the Department of Natural Resources

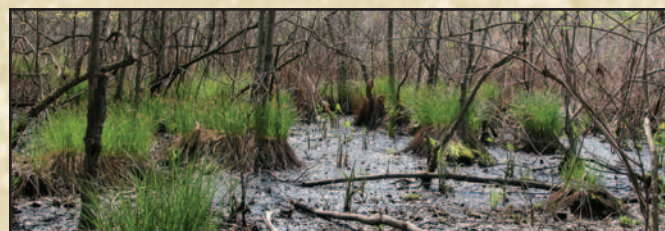
and Environmental Control. Opportunities include two citizens monitoring programs: Stream Adoption and Technical Monitoring. Free training workshops are held seasonally. Contact the Delaware Nature Society at Ashland Nature Center at (302) 239-2334 or leave a message at the Nature Society's other facility, Abbott's Mill Nature Center in Milford at (302) 422-0847.

Conserve Water

We can all do more to conserve one of our most valuable and increasingly priceless natural resources. Conservation has gone beyond its drought-oriented concept and become an everyday necessity in many parts of the United States and other countries. Millions of gallons are lost through leaking pipes, faucets and toilets. Adopting new habits such as only running full washer and dishwasher loads as needed, taking shorter showers, and not letting the faucet run when washing dishes and brushing teeth can save hundreds of gallons of water. Adding conservation shower heads and other devices saves even more. Contact your water utility for additional water saving measures.

Adopt A Wetland

Delaware Adopt-A-Wetland is a volunteer-oriented program aimed at promoting public awareness of wetland values and benefits through opportunities for citizen-based monitoring and stewardship. Everyone can be involved in this program. Adopting groups include businesses, schools, community groups, families and individuals. An understanding of wetlands processes, functions and importance leads to a greater appreciation of these ecological wonders. Delaware Adopt-A-Wetland is administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's Divisions of Fish and Wildlife and Water Resources. Contact the Aquatic Resource Education Center at (302) 653-2882.



Volunteer At The National Estuarine Research Reserve

Become a Friend of the Reserve and volunteer for activities in this cooperative natural estuarine habitat research and educational program between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Division of Soil and Water Conservation, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. Volunteers are needed for horseshoe crab spawning counts and migratory shorebird research, wetland walk guides, school group teachers, and landscaping projects to maintain trails and flower beds. Call the Reserve at (302) 739-3436; or Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control at (302) 739-9283.

Volunteer In A State Park

Delaware's state parks offer a variety of opportunities to get involved with projects ranging from trail construction and maintenance to helping out with special programs. For information on volunteer opportunities within our state parks, call the Division of Parks and Recreation, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control at (302) 739-9200.

Reduce Household Hazardous Waste

Our everyday activities can contribute significant levels of pollution to waterways. Nonpoint sources of pollution, such as chemical fertilizers that are transported through erosion and runoff, must be reduced if we are to make progress in cleaning up our waters. We must also be mindful not to overburden wastewater systems by adding hazardous, toxic, or unnecessary materials. Here are some tips for reducing household impacts.

- ◆ Use non-phosphate laundry detergents. Phosphates may over-stimulate plant growth in the bays and deplete oxygen levels needed by fish.
- ◆ Purchase non-toxic cleaning products.
- ◆ Read and follow directions on labels carefully.
- ◆ Use latex paint instead of oil-based paint when possible.
- ◆ Use fabric softener sheets rather than liquids (they have a lower metals content), or add one cup vinegar or a quarter cup of baking soda to the final rinse.

- ◆ Use stains and finishes derived from natural sources such as shellac, tung oil, and linseed oil.
- ◆ Know how to identify a hazardous product. Federal law requires that hazardous products be labeled Danger, Warning, or Caution.
- ◆ Safely dispose of hazardous substances at Delaware Solid Waste Authority's household hazardous waste collection events from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. the first Saturday of the month listed for the following locations: Delaware Recycling Center – September; Cheswold Collection Station – October; Pine Tree Corners – April; the Southern Solid Waste Management Center in Sussex County – May. You can drop off product containers marked, "Warning: Hazardous," "Flammable," "Corrosive," or "Explosive."

The following items are accepted:

- ◆ Household — full aerosol cans; bleach; chemistry kits; nail polish; nail polish removers; perfumes and colognes; disinfectants; drain cleaners; floor wax; mercury thermometers; moth balls; oven cleaner; smoke detectors; spot remover; toilet cleaner.



Recycling Household Hazardous Waste

Photo by DSWA